

After graduating from Dartmouth College, he became one of the first to answer President John F. Kennedy's call to public service by joining the newly formed Peace Corps. Paul's experience in the Peace Corps would lead him to great heights as a standard-bearer of the Democratic Party.

After his service in the Peace Corps and as a City Councilor in our hometown of Lowell, Paul was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1974. In 1978 he ran and won a seat in the United States Senate where he would serve until 1984 when he retired after being diagnosed with cancer.

Paul loved people and public service. His direct speaking style and heartfelt manner captured the hearts of the nation during his service in the United States Congress and especially during his campaign for President.

As a politician, Paul lived his beliefs. Perhaps Paul's greatest strength was that as a politician he took risks, challenging the tired assumptions about how change should take place.

Paul's vision of what a Democrat can and should be was an inspiration to me and continues to inspire Democrats across the country. Leading by example, Paul expanded the reach of our party and helped shape our promising future.

His leadership forced the debate on dealing with our national debt. At the same time, he reminded us that a Democrat can and should be pro-worker, and pro-family, and also pro-business-pro-employment.

Paul's career as a politician may have been cut short because of his battle with cancer, but his illness never prevented him from fighting for the issues, people, and the city he loved.

In my hometown of Lowell, Paul's fingerprints are all over the remarkable redevelopment and revitalization that has occurred over the past two decades. In the streets of Lowell today, I am constantly reminded of the lessons Paul taught me—that in every community you must preserve that which has meaning and beauty for its users and its visitors.

Paul was a visionary: he envisioned the connection of people to the places where they lived and worked. But more importantly, Paul was a doer: he identified significant community assets and challenged everyone around him to preserve and make visible these deeply felt dreams.

Paul motivated Lowell residents to make these dreams a reality. He didn't stop there. Throughout Massachusetts, he was able to rally similar support. In Concord, the Walden Woods Project preserved the lands and water sanctified by Henry David Thoreau. On Cape Cod, he helped to establish the Cape Cod Commission that is dedicated to protecting critical open space.

As a private citizen, he made significant contributions to education and the environment. Walden Woods, Cape Cod, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the Board of Higher Education all benefited from his leadership and ideas.

And he demonstrated compassion and caring to those who sought comfort and advice on how to deal with life-threatening illness.

I could go on and on about Paul Tsongas, and about how he was an extraordinary individual, but I won't.

I'll close with this—When announcing his presidential candidacy, Paul Tsongas said to his supporters, Just as we reach back to our

ancestors for our fundamental values, so we, as guardians of that legacy, must reach ahead to our children and their children. And we do so with a sense of sacredness in that reaching.

I'll simply say that I'm humbled and honored beyond words to follow in Paul Tsongas, footsteps. He truly devoted himself to making a difference not just for our generation, but for our children and future generations.

My thoughts and prayers go out to Paul's daughters, Ashley, Katina, and Molly; his sisters, Thaleia and Vicki, and especially to his wife, Niki, who continues to champion the issues that Paul spent his life fighting for.

IN TRIBUTE TO THE DISTINGUISHED CAREER OF SERVICE AND PHILANTHROPY OF
WILFRED GEORGE GOODEN

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 18, 2007

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Wilfred George Gooden, a great citizen and patriot, a philanthropist and Good Samaritan. Wilfred Gooden shuffled off the mortal coil and slipped the surly bonds of earth on Saturday, January 6, 2007. He was one month shy of his 75th birthday. More importantly, he was a son, a brother, an uncle, a friend, a neighbor, a servant of God, and a loving husband to his darling Sybil for 57 years.

Madam Speaker, I do not think any of the many people who knew and loved Wilfred Gooden thought that when he returned to his native land of Jamaica in December 2006, that it would have been his last trip from his adopted home in the United States of America? I do not think any of them dreamed that those last fleeting words on the phone or in person would have been their last contact with him before he took his last breath on the Sabbath, January 6, 2007 at the Andrews Memorial Hospital, Kingston, Jamaica, with his faithful wife, Sybil, of 57 years, at his bedside.

Who would have known that the Lord was going to take Wilfred Gooden's hands off the plough and say: "Your work is done, my faithful servant—it's now someone else's turn."

Wilfred Gooden was the last of three sons born to Mr. and Mrs. Gooden in Westmoreland, Jamaica. His parents and brother, Sam predeceased him. Vibert his eldest brother, lives in Atlanta, Georgia. His mother Ethel and stepfather Edburn took care of the family after the death of Wilfred's father. A very close-knit family, Wilfred and his brother telephoned each other and had long chats each day. Even in his last days on earth, Wilfred and his brother Vibert were on the phone.

Brought up in a Christian home, Wilfred was baptized at the Rollington Town Seventh-Day Adventist church, and never forgot his first love—Jesus. His rich baritone voice could be heard in praises as he called his family and all who entered his home to worship morning and evening—wherever he was.

His Christ-like character was seen in his deeds, the way he treated everyone with whom he came in contact—it did not matter their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, political persuasion, title or status; everyone was treated with respect, courtesy and kindness.

In his youth it was not unusual for Wilfred to bring home, unannounced, three or four friends for the weekend who would be warmly received by a generous but sometimes frustrated mother.

In 1944, Wilfred traveled to the United States where he settled in New York City. For many years, he pursued and enjoyed a successful career in mechanical dentistry. Former clients still praise the quality and craftsmanship of his work.

Always on the lookout for new adventures and challenges, Wilfred invested in a brownstone on West 142nd Street, which it needed some repairs. With much enthusiasm, he immediately utilized his knowledge of plumbing as a result of his liberal arts training which required him to learn a trade as a part of degree program and performed the work himself, and in the process launched a new career for himself in housing rehabilitation.

To gain more knowledge about his business, Wilfred attended City College and earned a Certificate in Building Engineering. In 1961, he organized a general contracting company with the basic purpose of renovating existing properties. As owner and builder of multiple dwellings, Wilfred renovated a group of old tenements into two and three bedroom modern, class A apartments. In many areas of New York City, Wilfred has revitalized entire neighborhoods, creating homes that gave and still give each dweller a sense of renewed hope and dignity. As general contractor for Maurel Realty Corporation, he renovated a one hundred apartment complex and for Almeric Realty Corporation, he renovated a fifty apartment complex. Serving in dual capacity as Project Manager and Field Superintendent, he directed every aspect of these massive projects.

Wilfred was appointed by Mayor David Dinkins of the City of New York to work with Roger Starr, Administrator of Housing as consultant to the City's Housing program in urban areas. He reviewed the proposed projects with a vision of minimizing costs and suggested rehabilitation of buildings in the city's most needed areas.

Wilfred George Gooden walked with kings, but never lost the common touch. His walls both in Jamaica and New York are filled with photographs and citations from both the American and Jamaican governments including former President Bill Clinton, former Jamaican Prime Ministers Norman Manley, Michael Manley, Alexander Bustamante, Edward Seaga and P.J. Patterson, as well as government officials in New York and Jamaica, church leaders, industry leaders and the leaders of educational institutions.

Wilfred Gooden was, above all, a community servant. He sat on the Board of Directors of: Housing Board in New York; FISH Clinics in Jamaica; The American Friends of Jamaica; Concerned Committee for Christian Education; and NAJASO.

Wilfred Gooden was honored as a philanthropist by Message Magazine in 1996 for his community service and humanitarianism and awarded honorary Doctor of Letters degree from Faith and Grant College in Huntsville, Alabama.

Wilfred Gooden wanted others to succeed and helped countless Jamaicans relocating to New York to get jobs—many in his own construction company. When housing was needed, when food was required, when winter

came and clothes and heat were required to keep bodies warm, they and others in the community knew whom to call: Wilfred Gooden. His charity knew no bounds. In the early years of their marriage, almost every Jamaican relocating to New York made the pilgrimage to the home of Wilfred Gooden for assistance in gaining a foothold in a new land.

Wilfred Gooden was committed to his Church—the Ephesus Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Manhattan. He served as M.V. Leader, Sabbath School teacher, Sabbath School Superintendent and since 1980, as Chairman of the Building Committee, where he did so much to see that the physical plant of the Church was maintained in a manner befitting God's people.

Christian Education was his passion. In 1980, he established The Concerned Committee for Christian Education to provide funds towards Christian schooling for Jamaica's children and organized a concert featuring the Cantata Choir from New York, held at the National Arena in Jamaica, of which the proceeds were used to refurbish and re-start the New Hope Preparatory school at the North Street Seventh-day Adventist Church. The school started out with one teacher and two students. The school has grown to 197 students, 12 teachers and a staff of 5.

Wilfred Gooden provided scholarships for young people who would otherwise not have been able to attend his alma mater, Northern Caribbean University, formerly West Indies College.

Wilfred Gooden personally assisted students from Jamaica, New York, Alabama, and Kenya. Each summer for the past 15 years, he has arranged employment for many students from various Adventist Colleges, thus aiding many in their pursuit of higher Christian education.

As much as he supported students, it was not only "classroom knowledge" that Wilfred Gooden wanted to instill. The Concerned Committee for Christian Education also sponsored the cost for 26 children from Jamaica to go to Disney World in Orlando, Florida, who would not have otherwise been able to have that fun-filled and exciting experience.

The young ladies and gentlemen of his hometown church—Ephesus in Harlem, New York—knew that their tertiary education was assured if they were willing to learn etiquette and social graces. All of the participants worked hard on the annual programs which his team, headed by Ms. Valerie Bennett and Mr. Joseph Merriweather managed. As the young ladies and gentlemen prepared for the Cotillion Ball at the Waldorf Astoria in New York, they stood tall in full bloom and presented themselves under the direction of these nurturers. It is important to note that while this program facilitated the personal development of these young people, it also funded scholarships for their tertiary education.

Jamaican students pursuing medicine, engineering, dentistry, and other disciplines overseas were assured of tuition, housing and personal assistance. Wilfred Gooden wanted to ensure that all Jamaican youth had a chance to succeed so they could make meaningful contributions to society.

Wilfred Gooden loved his native Jamaica and was always willing to support his native land. He thought young people from the country should learn Jamaican civic history and government, so with the authorization of the Jamaican government, he distributed copies of the Jamaican Constitution to every high school student in Jamaica.

Wilfred Gooden brought notable Americans, including former Mayor David Dinkins and New York City Councilwoman Una Clarke, to

the campus of his alma mater, Northern Caribbean University. He wanted people to know the quality of the Jamaican educational system and what his church and school were doing for the world.

The philosophy and creed that Wilfred Gooden lived by was simple:

To leave some simple mark behind
To keep his having lived in mind
To be an honest generous foe
To play any part even if the honors did not fall on him.

And like Edgar Guest would say:

I'd like to think when life is done
That I had filled a needed post
That here and there I'd paid my fare
With more than idle talk and boast;
That I had taken gifts divine,
The breath of life and manhood fine,
And tried to use them now and then
In service to my fellow men.

Madam Speaker, the famed writer John Donne declared "Death comes equally to us all and makes us all equal when it comes." Donne goes on:

Death, be not proud,
Though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for
Thou art not so,
For, those whom thou think'st
Thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.

In closing Madam Speaker, let me say that although my heart is heavy with sorrow, it is also filled with joy because I was one of the thousands of people whose lives has elevated and enriched by my association with the remarkable, the unforgettable, the irreplaceable Wilfred George Gooden. He was a role model, a hero, a mentor, a friend. He was my uncle and I will miss him terribly.